

of them remained all night. We sent in the evening three young Indians with a present of tobacco for the chiefs of the three upper villages, inviting them to come down in the morning to a council with us. 000

**Minnetarees and Ahnahaways.** "Accordingly, the next day, Sunday, October 28, we were joined by many of the Minnetarees and Ahnahaways from above but the wind was so violent from the southwest that the chiefs of the lower villages could not come up, and the council was deferred till tomorrow. In the meantime we entertained our visitors by showing them what was new to them in the boat; all which, as well as our black servant, they called Great Medicine, the meaning of which we afterwards learnt. We also consulted the grand chief of the Mandans, Black Cat and Mr. Jesseaume, as to the names, characters, etc., of the chiefs with whom we are to hold the council. In the course of the day we received several presents from the women, consisting of corn, boiled hominy, and garden stuffs; in our turn we gratified the wife of the great chief with a gift of a glazed earthen jar. Our hunter brought us two beavers. In the afternoon we sent the Minnetarees chiefs to smoke for us with the great chief of the Mandans, and told them we would speak in the morning. Finding that we shall be obliged to pass the winter at this place, we went up the river about one and a half mile to-day with a view of finding a convenient spot for a fort, but the timber was too scarce and small for our purposes.

**First Indian Council.** "Monday, October 29th. The morning was fine and we prepared our presents and speech for the council. After breakfast we were visited by an old chief of the Ahnahaways, who finding himself growing old and weak, had transferred his power to his son, who is now at war against the Shoshonees. At ten o'clock the chiefs were all assembled under an awning of our sails, stretched so as to exclude the wind which had become high. That the impression might be the more forceable, the men were all paraded, and the council opened by a discharge from the swivel of the boat. We then delivered a speech, which like those we had already made, intermingled advice with assurances of friendship and trade; while we were speaking the old Ahnahaway chief grew very restless, and observed that he could not wait so long, as his camp was exposed to the 622  
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hostilities of the Shoshonees. He was instantly rebuked with great dignity by one of the chiefs for this violation of decorum at such a moment, and remained quiet during the rest of the council. Towards the end of our speech we introduced the subject of our Ricara chief, with whom we recommended a firm peace. To this they seemed well disposed, and all smoked with him very amicably. We all mentioned the goods which had been taken from the Frenchman, and expressed a wish that they should be restored. This being over, we proceeded to distribute the presents with great ceremony. One chief of each town was acknowledged by a gift of a flag, a medal with the likeness of the president of the United States, a uniform coat, hat and feather; to the second chiefs we gave a medal representing some animals, and a loom for weaving; to the third chiefs, medals with the impressions of a farmer sowing grain. A variety of other presents were distributed but none seemed to give them more satisfaction than an iron corn-mill which we gave to the Mandans.

"The chiefs who were made today are: Shahaka or Big White, a first chief, and Kagohami or Little Raven, a second chief of the lower village of the Mandans, called Matootonha. The other chiefs of an inferior quality who were recommended were: 1. Ohheénaw, or Big Man, a Cheyenne taken prisoner by the Mandans who adopted him, and he now enjoys great consideration among the tribe. 2. Shotahawrora, or coal, of the second Mandan village, which is called Roptahee. We made Poscopsahe, or Black Cat, the first chief of the village, and the grand chief of the whole Mandan nation; his second chief is Kagonomokshe, or raven man chief; inferior chiefs of this village were Tawnoheo and Bellahsara, of which we did not learn the translation." (id 161)

**Big White.** "Tuesday, 30. We were this morning visited by the two persons from the lower village, one the Big White, the chief of the village, the other the Cheyenne called the Big Man. They had been hunting, and did not return yesterday early enough to attend the council. At their request we repeated part of our speech of yesterday, and put the medal round the neck of the chief. Captain Clarke took a perioque and went up the river in search of a good wintering place, and returned after going seven miles to the lower point of an island on the north side,

about one mile in length, he found the banks on the north side high with coal occasionally, and the country fine on all sides, but the want of wood and the scarcity of game up the river, induced us to decide on fixing ourselves lower down during the winter. In the evening our men danced among themselves to the great amusement of the Indians.

**Mandan's Speech.** "Wednesday, 31st. A second chief arrived this morning with an invitation from the grand chief of the Mandans, to come to his village where he wished to present some corn to us and speak with us. Captain Clarke walked down to his village. He was first seated with great ceremony on a robe by the side of the chief, who then threw over his shoulders another robe handsomely ornamented. The pipe was then smoked with several of the old men who were seated around the chief. After some time he began his discourse by observing that he believe what we had told him, and that they should soon enjoy peace, which would gratify him as well as his people, because they could then hunt without fear of being attacked, and the women might work in the fields without looking every moment for the enemy, and at night put off their moccasins, a phrase by which is conveyed the idea of security, when the women could undress at night without fear of attack.

"As to the Ricaras, he continued, in order to show you that we wish peace with all men, that chief, pointing to his second chief, will go with some warriors back to the Ricaras with their chief now here and smoke with that nation. When we heard of your coming, all the nations around returned from their hunting to see you, in hopes of receiving large presents. All were disappointed and some discontented. For his part he was not much so, though his village was. He added that he would go and see his great father, the president. Two of the steel traps stolen from the Frenchman were then laid before Captain Clarke, and the women brought about twelve bushels of corn. After the chief had finished, Captain Clarke made an answer to the speech and then he returned to the boat, where he found the chief of the third village and Kagohami (the Little Raven) who smoked and talked about half an hour. After they left the boat the grand chief of the Mandans came dressed in the clothes we had given him, with

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his two children, and begged to see the men dance, in which they willingly gratified him." (id 168)

**Peace With the Aricaras.** "Thursday, November 1st. At ten o'clock the chiefs of the lower village arrived. They requested that we would call at their village for some corn; that they were willing to make peace with the Ricaras; that they had never provoked the war between them, but as the Ricaras killed some of their chiefs, they had retaliated on them; that they had killed them like birds, till they were tired of killing them, so that they would send a chief and some warriors to smoke with them. In the evening we dropped down to the lower village, where Captain Lewis went on shore, and Captain Clarke proceeded to a point of wood on the north side.

"Friday, November 2. He therefore went up to the village, where eleven bushels of corn were presented to him. In the meantime Captain Clarke went down with the boat three miles, and having found a good position where there was plenty of timber, encamped and began to fell trees to build our huts. Our Ricara chief set out with one Mandan chief and several Minnitarees and Mandan warriors; the wind was from the southeast, and the weather being fine, crowds of Indians came down to visit us." (id 169)

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**Mandan Hunt.** "Monday, 5th. The Indians are all out on their hunting parties. A camp of Mandans caught within two days one hundred goats a short distance below us. Their mode of hunting them is to form a large strong pen or fold, from which a fence made of bushes gradually widens on each side. The animals are surrounded by the hunters and gently driven towards this pen, in which they imperceptibly find themselves inclosed, and are then at the mercy of the hunters." (id 170.)

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"Thursday, 8. The morning again cloudy; our huts advanced very well, and we are visited by numbers of Indians who come to let their horses graze near us. In the day the horses are let loose in quest of grass, in the night they are collected and receive an armful of small boughs of the cottonwood, which being very juicy, soft and brittle, form nutritious and agreeable food." (id 171.)

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**Northern Indians.** "Wednesday, 14th. The river rose last night half an inch, and is now filled with floating ice. This morning was

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The permanent name one received when returning from the first successful war expedition was received from the father's clan.

The moiety had both ceremonial and economic functions. When dividing the buffalo captured in the corral, the inclosure was symbolic of the ceremonial lodge. A line was drawn through the center of the corral extending from the midpoint of the entrance to the opposite side. Those animals falling to the left of the entrance belonged to the WaxikEna and Tamisik, while those of the opposite side belonged to the other moiety. Women of a moiety butchered on their side without regard to clan. Each moiety constructed its half of the ceremonial lodge and would also erect an earth lodge used as a residence when the clan of the owner of the new lodge assisted in putting up goods for the assistance rendered by the opposite moiety. It was believed that the moiety regulated marriage prior to the last smallpox epidemic, but a study of lineages indicated that it had little influence over marriages after 1837. There was a feeling that in former times traditional eagle-trapping sites were divided into moieties, each moiety trapping on its side of the Missouri River. If such division existed, all evidences had disappeared before 1870. There was considerable competition between moieties. When one moiety had more successful war leaders than the other, its members would tease the others and question their bravery. Sons of men of the same moiety teased each other a great deal. Each moiety had a leader who assisted in the division of the buffalo taken in a corral. 616 224 [582]

VILLAGE AND TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

Mandan village and tribal leadership was vested in the hierarchy of bundle-owners or priests who constituted a group of head men whose number varied from time to time depending on the status of the various bundles. From this group two leaders were selected whose war or peacemaking record exceeded that of all others or who, because of other practices, had acquired considerable popularity with the people. The one whose record in warfare was greatest was selected in council to be war chief. A second chief selected was one who had important ceremonial bundles, had given many feasts, and had performed many rites for the general welfare of the village. These were considered the 621 622 623

621 leaders of the hierarchy of older men; they were expected to  
 622 co-operate for the general welfare of the village. They were en-  
 623 titled to wear a headdress of buffalo horns and ermine during  
 council meetings, on various social occasions, and during peace-  
 making discussions with neighboring tribes.

622 The Mandan informants thought that sons of chiefs were  
 usually selected, since they were better trained and were ex-  
 posed to sacred bundles which had proved their potency. From  
 a study of Mandan lineages it was not possible to establish the  
 accuracy of this opinion, since all lineages having chiefs except  
 that of Four Bears were broken by the smallpox. In this lineage  
 there was the following inheritance of chiefs: Good Boy was  
 chief at Slant Village after the first smallpox epidemic and lived  
 at Fort Clark for nine years as first chief, where he died; Four  
 Bears, son of Good Boy, was chief for a number of years prior  
 to 1837, when he died of smallpox; Bad Gun, son of Four Bears,  
 was selected after he had sold his rights in the Black Mouth  
 Society. The Mandan claim that Bad Gun was not a strong  
 chief and attribute his selection to the fact that he was the son  
 of Four Bears. Because he had acquired his father's sacred  
 bundles which had brought Four Bears unique success in many  
 war expeditions, the people thought he would be lucky.

The Mandan endeavored to select two men for chiefs whose  
 interests were complementary. They felt that one chief should  
 be an individual gifted in warfare and capable of repelling the  
 enemy from the immediate environment of the village. The  
 other, it was felt, should be one who had at heart the interest of  
 the people in their daily activities around the village. He should  
 be one who was thoughtful of others, gave frequent feasts, was  
 popular with the tribes coming to the village to trade, and was  
 able to settle little quarrels within the village or with visiting  
 tribes. It was also felt that the two head chiefs should be of  
 opposite moieties.

622 A chief had little or no authority apart from the council of  
 537 which he was a member. His principal authority was derived  
 from his ability as an orator to persuade the council of older  
 men to sanction his opinions. A chief was, first of all, an orator  
 who in council, after enumerating his various accomplishments

5. A sacred robe decorated with the rainbow and used in rainmaking rites.

## THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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to demonstrate the extent to which he had worked for the welfare of the entire village, then offered an opinion as to the wisdom of a certain act or policy. He was never demoted, the Mandan claimed; others younger who had been distinguishing themselves merely replaced the older man in public esteem. A chief's greatness was based on the length of time that his opinions were accepted to the exclusion of all others' opinions. A chief was expected to conform strictly to village and tribal custom.

The day-by-day and calendar round of economic, social, and ceremonial activities were rigidly regulated by tradition. In matters relative to gardening, the Corn Bundle leaders, Goose Society, and females of the various households set their own rules. When public sanction was given a young man by one or more members of the council of older men to perform a certain ceremony and he had made public announcement from a rooftop that he would perform the ceremony, a time was reserved for the ceremony, and the Black Mouths would have prevented any interference. The Mandan believed that quarrels should not arise over schedules for performance of the various ceremonies. The fact is that the Mandan liked to attend ceremonies and believed that bad luck would come to anyone who deviated from the normal pattern of behavior.

The responsibilities for leadership in various Mandan social and ceremonial activities were profusely scattered through the entire population. A person who would be the leader in one activity became a subordinate member of another activity in which he was expected to follow the leader's directions. For instance, when the time arrived for the performance of the Okipa ceremony, the entire population was organized around the officers for that ceremony, while the Black Mouth Society enforced the rules. It is highly improbable that the Black Mouths received any formal instruction. Custom defined the rules of behavior during the Okipa which were known by all except very young children. It was also customary when the enemy were not especially troublesome for the greater part of a village group to leave for a short time to trap eagles. The village would break up into a dozen or more camps, each of which was under the leadership of a male having an eagle-trapping bundle. Regardless of a man's status during other activities, he was subordinate to the

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554 leader. Even the most distinguished war leader, who was one of  
 796 the two head chiefs of the village, frequently joined an expedi-  
 626 tion under another for the purpose of capturing horses, although  
 in this instance recognition was often shown an outstanding  
 leader by naming him a co-leader.

622 An essential function of a chief was to mold public opinion so  
 that a village could act in unison. A chief was considered emi-  
 nent if for a long time under his leadership there had been a  
 minimum of dissension in the village. Mandan informants still  
 speak of Good Boy, who was chief of Slant Village below the  
 Heart River after the first smallpox epidemic. He was able to  
 unite the remnants of several villages into a single village and to  
 co-ordinate elements with a minimum of friction. He was essen-  
 tially a village leader who devoted himself, according to tradi-  
 tion, to the rebuilding of the tribe to its former prominence. It  
 is significant to note that, a few years after his death, one group  
 of Mandan separated from the parent-village and were not re-  
 united until Good Boy's son, Four Bears, was elevated to second  
 chief.

622 A chief could prevent intervillage or intravillage warfare only  
 182 to the extent to which he could inculcate a concept of tribal  
 778 unity. Neither a chief nor the council has authority to prevent a  
 portion of a village from separating and establishing a separate  
 village. Such separations as have occurred have usually been of  
 short duration, largely because of the integration of the cere-  
 monial structure through the entire tribal population. Although  
 each permanent Mandan village was in a large measure a sepa-  
 rate economic, social, and ceremonial unit, the villages were not  
 entirely independent. The turtle drums, which were considered  
 the most sacred objects of the tribe, were held within the Nup-  
 tadi band of east-side Mandan, and the other villages were  
 obliged to borrow them for ceremonial purposes. Whereas the  
 sacred cedar in the center of each village was a symbol of village  
 unity, the Mandan considered the turtle drums a symbol of  
 tribal unity.

6. Cf. chap. vii, "Eagle-trapping."

## LETTER—No. 13.

## MANDAN VILLAGE, UPPER MISSOURI.

● 622 In several of my former Letters I have given sketches of the village, and some few of the customs of these peculiar people; and I have many more yet in store; some of which will induce the readers to laugh, and others almost dispose them to weep. But at present, I drop them, and introduce a few of the wild and gentlemanly Mandans themselves; and first, Ha-nah-nu-mauh, the wolf chief (PLATE 49). This man is head-chief of the nation, and familiarly known by the name of "Chef de Loup," as the French Traders call him; a haughty, austere, and overbearing man, respected and feared by his people rather than loved. The tenure by which this man holds his office, is that by which the head-chiefs of most of the tribes claim, that of inheritance. It is a general, though not an infallible rule amongst the numerous tribes of North American Indians, that the office of chief belongs to the eldest son of a chief; provided he shews himself, by his conduct, to be equally worthy of it as any other in the nation: making it hereditary on a very proper condition—in default of which requisites, or others which may happen, the office is elective.

The dress of this chief was one of great extravagance, and some beauty; manufactured of skins, and a great number of quills of the raven, forming his stylish head-dress.

The next and second chief of the tribe, is Mah-to-toh-pa (the four bears). This extraordinary man, though second in office is undoubtedly the first and most popular man in the nation. Free, generous, elegant and gentlemanly in his deportment—handsome, brave and valiant; wearing a robe on his back, with the history of his battles emblazoned on it; which would fill a book of themselves, if properly translated. This, readers, is the most extraordinary man, perhaps, who lives at this day, in the atmosphere of Nature's noblemen; and I shall certainly tell you more of him anon.

After him, there are Mah-tahp-ta-ha, he who rushes through the middle (PLATE 50); Seehk-hee-da, the mouse-coloured feather (PLATE 51); Sun-ja-ka-ko-kah (the deceiving wolf); Mah-to-he-ha (the old bear), and others, distinguished as chiefs and warriors—and there are belles also; such as Mi-neek-e-sank-te-ca, the mink (PLATE 53); and the little gray-haired Sha-ko-ka, mint (PLATE 52); and fifty others, who are famous for

## LIFE AMONG THE MANDANS.

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formed by the women in the morning.<sup>1</sup> Their sweet corn and beans are boiled whole; they make use of large earthen pots of their own manufacture, made of black clay, of which they have plenty near their villages. They make them of different sizes, from five gallons to a quart. In these vessels is never anything of a greasy nature.<sup>1</sup> \* \* \* \* \* The bottoms of the pots are of an oblong shape; it therefore requires much care to keep them from upsetting, for which purpose when they are put to the fire a hole is made in the ashes to secure and prop them erect, and when taken away they are placed upon a sort of mat made of the fibers of the bois blanc; these coils or rugs are made of different sizes, according to the dimensions of the several pots, which keeps them firm and secure. Some of these pots are provided with two cones, or handles.<sup>1</sup> \* \*

Baptiste La France made his appearance here. This man had left the Prairie la Souris [Mouse River] with a small assortment of goods for the purpose of trading, equipped by the Hudson Bay Company. He now resides upon the south side of the river, at the great Mandan village,\* and hearing of the arrival of white people, he came over to us. He now informed the chief, Black Cat, who his guests were and the cause of our visit, which was mere curiosity. [The chief] instantly retired to his family hut and brought out his flag, which was given him in 1804-5; they also gave him a silver medal, and the same articles were also given to the principal chief of each of the other villages, also several very useful utensils were left amongst them.<sup>†</sup> I saw the remains of an excellent large corn mill, which the foolish fellows had demolished on purpose to barb their arrows; the largest piece of it which they could not break nor work up into any weapon they have now fixed to a wooden handle, and make use of it to pound marrow bones, to make grease."

We were now desirous of crossing the river, therefore sent off La France to engage people of the opposite village to come over for us.<sup>2</sup> \* \* \* \* \* We were now informed that eight canoes were in waiting for us, from the opposite side, and the same number of young men had come over to assist in crossing our horses.<sup>2</sup> \* \* \* \* \* On our going over to the war side we found the chief of the Great Mandan village, Le Gros Blanc. He was waiting with his own canoe to ferry over Mr. Chaboillez and me. He appeared very

<sup>†</sup>To each chief, Lewis and Clarke presented a medal, a flag, and a uniform coat. In the narrative of the expedition is the following sentence: "A variety of other presents were distributed, but none seemed to give them more satisfaction than the iron corn mill, which we gave to the Mandans."

<sup>1</sup>The Mandans, about 1760, were settled on the banks of the Missouri, eighty miles below, seven villages on the west and two on the east side of the river. The two villages were reduced by small-pox, and moved up the river and settled a village near the Raviniers, and afterwards the people of the other village joined them. In 1796 they were in two villages at the points where Henry found them, on opposite sides of Missouri, about three miles apart.

<sup>2</sup> [Category 116, p. 328.-A.] <sup>2</sup> [Category 116, p. 328.-A.]

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attentive and polite in conveying our baggage on board. We now perceived another American flag flying in the village on the south side of the river, while that of the Black Cat was still displayed over the hut we had occupied. Our conductor now informed us the flag we saw in the opposite village was his property, and had been hoisted by his orders over his own hut, where he begged we would take up our lodgings. The young men, I observed were very prompt in getting our horses over. They fastened a line to the horse's mouth, the end of which one of them takes in his teeth, and swims on ahead, while others swim along on each side, and in the rear, draws the horse on very expeditiously. They swim remarkably swift, and notwithstanding the Missouri at this place is half a mile wide, and the current very strong, they drift down but a very considerable distance before they land.

Their canoes are of very singular construction and a stranger would scarcely dare venture his life in them to cross such a deep and rapid stream. They are of a circular form; the timbers are nothing but a few bent willows of about three inches in circumference, over which is stretched a raw buffalo hide, with the hair inside, and sewed first to the gunwales which are generally of a willow, about two inches in diameter. I was really surprised to see the great weight that one of those slender vessels would carry. We embarked, baggage, saddles, etc., weighing at least 200 pounds, Mr. Chaboillez and myself, and our ferryman, who was a remarkably stout fellow. Our canoe or dish would have supported at least 100 pounds more. What they make use of, in lieu of a paddle, is a pole about five feet long, split at one end so as to admit of a piece of board, about two feet long, and half a foot broad, which is lashed to the pole and forms a kind of cross, and as there is but one made use of for each canoe, and he that paddles pulls directly for the opposite shore, every stroke he gives turns his dish almost entirely around; when, to preserve his position and place him fronting his intended route he must give a stroke upon the other hand which brings him up again, and so on until he gets over the river, which, however, is not accomplished until they have drifted down nearly a mile.

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Some of them, I observed, were more expert than others in managing their dishes, and did not drift more than a quarter of a mile. But as these vessels are very light they have the precaution to carry them upon their heads, or slung upon their backs to a considerable distance higher up the river, than where they wish to land. When we were on the water our conductor repeatedly made signs to us to salute the flag, by firing our guns, but we did not think proper to comply with his wishes or pretended we did not comprehend him.

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We soon after landed at the village, which is situated upon the very edge of the bank. Here we were received by another

chief called Le Grand\* who insisted upon our taking lodgings in his hut, which stood near the edge of the banks. We accordingly entered it, but soon after we were visited by several other principal men, who requested some of us to take up our abode in their huts during our stay among them. La France advised us to do so, telling us we would be more at our ease by separating than if we remained all in the same hut. Accordingly Mr. Chaboillez and his people, consisting of an Indian who was his brother-in-law, and Mr. Allen McDonnell, took up their lodgings with Hairy Horn, and our guide, Hugh McReacan, (Cracken) Straight Horn, myself and my people, T. Viandrie and Joseph Du Charmé, remained with Le Grand, a very civil fellow. This arrangement having been settled and instantly put into execution, we were provided with beds, or buffalo hides to sit upon. <sup>1</sup> \* \* \* \* \*

We paid a visit to Le Gros Blanc, who thought we had somewhat slighted him in not taking up our residence in his hut, but kept the flag flying in honor of our arrival until sunset. We made amends as far as our circumstances would permit, and presented him with some tobacco, ammunition, etc., as a remuneration for his trouble in assisting us over. He was perfectly satisfied, and appeared highly pleased with the presents. [431]

We found in this village a Canadian by the name of Jussaume,† who accompanied Captains Lewis and Clarke to Washington on their return from their voyage of discoveries to the Pacific Ocean as interpreter to the Mandan chief, Le Gros Blanc. This man has been a resident among the Indians for upwards of fifteen years. He speaks their language tolerably well, has a wife and family who live and dress in the same manner as the natives. As for himself, he still retains the outward appearance of a Christian, and his principles as far as I could observe, are much worse than those of a Mandane. He is possessed of every superstition natural to these people, nor is he different in performing every mean, dirty trick which they have acquired from their intercourse with a set of worthless scoundrels accustomed to visit these parts, some for the purpose of trade, and others, to save themselves from justice and the laws of their country, that would not fail to punish them for their numerous offenses."

EDWARD D. NEILL.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

\*Le Gros Blanc, or Big White, called by the Indians Shahaka was the first chief of this village and was recognized by Lewis and Clark and presented with a medal. Ohheeenaw, Le Grant, or Big Man was much esteemed in the tribe. He was a Cheyenne taken prisoner, and then adopted by the Mandans.

† In the narrative of Lewis and Clarke his name is spelled Jesseaume, and on the 27th of October, 1805, was engaged as interpreter, and with the expedition went to the Pacific Ocean, accompanied by his Indian wife and babe. On the 16th of August, 1806, soon after Henry's departure, Lewis and Clarke returned to the Mandan village, and Le Gros Black, Big White, with his wife and son and Jesseaume, the next day accompanied the military expedition to St. Louis, and from thence they went to Washington and were presented to President Jefferson.

[Category 116, p. 332.-A.]

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